

# Notes From The Field: *NE*

## Duck Opener Report 9/25/18

### UPDATE:

*Was this helpful? Let us know by taking this [3 question survey](#).*

### **Vilas/Oneida**

Early seasons in this area showed low to moderate pressure for early teal and early Canada goose seasons. We typically see moderate pressure in this area for the duck season opener and will expect similar pressure to previous years. Our most abundant ducks in the area are mallard, wood ducks and hooded mergansers. We were not impacted as heavily with some of the recent rains in Wisconsin so water levels in the area are normal. Most recently we have been experiencing sunny and warm weather.

Regarding duck broods, we have observed similar numbers in previous years for mallards, wood ducks and blue-winged teal. Canada goose broods however seemed to be less than in previous year in our area, likely due to the late snow we received in April. For total number of birds, we expect similar numbers to previous years in our area. Aquatic food availability is normal with wild rice and smartweed being our top wetland foods on the landscape.

### **Marathon/Wood/Portage**

Early seasons in this area showed low to moderate pressure for early teal (no early season hunting is allowed on Mead Wildlife Area) and the youth seasons while early Canada goose season saw moderate to high pressure. In our area we typically see high pressure in this area for the duck season opener and will expect similar pressure to previous years. Our most abundant ducks in the area are mallard, wood ducks and blue-winged teal. Heavy rains from Aug 24 - Sept 4 delivered about 8 inches of rain to Central Wisconsin. This helped with water levels on both Mead and McMillan Wildlife Areas (WA). Most recently we have been experiencing warm and sunny weather. While there are still several flowages drawn down for maintenance issues, most flowages have average water levels for this time of year. Mead WA is still in the process of de-watering North Honey Island for a water control structure installation. In addition, a prescribed burn is planned for this flowage later in the fall. As a reminder Mead WA has restricted hunting hours Monday, October 1st through Tuesday, October 16th. (1:00PM closure).

Regarding duck broods, we have observed similar numbers in previous years for mallards and wood ducks. Blue-winged teal and other ducks seemed to have had good production this year as we observed more broods this year compared to prior years. Canada goose broods however seemed fewer than in previous year in our area, likely due to the late snow we received in April. For total number of birds, we expect similar numbers to previous years in our area. Aquatic food availability is normal with smartweed, bidens, and wild rice being our top wetland foods on the landscape.

### **Shawano/Oconto**

Early seasons in this area showed low to moderate pressure for early teal and the youth season. While the early Canada goose seasons saw low pressure. We typically see moderate to high pressure in this area for

the duck season opener and will expect less pressure compared to previous years. Our most abundant ducks in the area are mallard, wood ducks and teal. With recent weather there will be higher water giving us good wetland conditions in our area. Most recently we have been experiencing mild and rainy weather and expect similar weather heading into the regular duck season opener.

Regarding duck broods, we have observed similar numbers in previous years for mallards, wood ducks and blue-winged teal. Canada goose broods however seemed to be less than in previous year in our area, likely due to the late snow we received in April. For total number of birds, we expect similar numbers to previous years in our area. Aquatic food availability is similar to past years with wild rice and bur reed being our top wetland foods on the landscape.

### ***Outagamie***

Early seasons in this area showed low to moderate pressure for early teal, Canada goose, while the youth seasons saw low pressure. We typically see low to moderate pressure in this area for the duck season opener and will expect similar pressure to previous years. Our most abundant ducks in the area are mallard, wood ducks and teal. With recent weather there will be higher water in river corridors and backwaters. Most recently we have been experiencing warm and sunny weather and expect similar weather heading into the regular duck season opener.

Regarding duck broods, we have observed similar numbers compared to previous years for mallards and blue-winged teal. Wood ducks and Canada goose broods however seemed to be fewer than in previous year in our area, likely due to the late snow we received in April. For total number of birds, we expect similar numbers to previous years in our area. Aquatic food availability is normal in our area.

### ***Green Bay/Brown/ Kewanee/Door***

Early seasons in this area showed moderate pressure for early teal, and low to moderate pressure for early Canada goose and the youth seasons. We typically see moderate to high pressure in this area for the duck season opener and will expect similar pressure to previous years. Our most abundant ducks in the area are mallard and wood ducks. High water had flooded ditches and farm fields, making waterfowl more scattered across the landscape than previously due to the flooding events. Conditions on Green Bay have not changed as a result of recent rain events. Most recently we have been experiencing very variable weather and expect similar weather heading into the regular duck season opener.

Regarding duck broods, we have observed similar numbers in previous years for mallards, wood ducks, other ducks. Blue-winged teal seemed to have good production this year as we saw more broods this year compared to prior years. Canada Goose broods also seemed to be similar to previous year in our area. For total number of birds, we expect similar numbers to previous years in our area. Aquatic food availability is normal with mixed submergent foods, water celery, and smartweed species being our top wetland foods on the landscape.

Corn is being harvested across Brown, Kewaunee and Door Counties at a fast pace. Farmers are limited to plowing fields as a result of recent rain events, making fields attractive to waterfowl and Canada Geese. Soybean crops are looking ready for harvest in the coming weeks. Reports of snow geese are beginning as Canada Goose flocks are beginning to stage up for the fall migration. Diver ducks have not begun to arrive in Green Bay, but this usually begins in mid-October and peaks in November. Inland rivers and wetlands will also be attractive locations for waterfowl as a result of recent rains increasing wetland sizes. Lastly, white oak acorn crops are abundant and local wood ducks are focusing in on this food source.

## **Statewide**

Wisconsin statewide outlook for this season looks similar to previous years. Brood counts seem average for mallards, blue-winged teal wood ducks and other ducks. Canada goose numbers however seem to have been affected statewide due to the late snowfall we received in April that may affected our nesting geese. Late snowstorms in April set nesting back and caused a lot of first attempt failures across the state. Water levels across the state are variable with many places being near normal, with exceptions in southern and central Wisconsin. Southern Wisconsin has seen almost daily rainfall starting mid-August making water levels considerably higher than normal. Wetland food across the state seems to be similar to previous years and crop harvest also seems to be similar in most areas with corn being slightly ahead of a normal year.

To be successful we encourage all of you to get out and scout before your hunting trips. Waterfowl hunters in Wisconsin have shown that hunters who scout 3 times before hunting shoot three times as many birds. It will be important also to check your spots out before hunting as some spots may not be huntable due to high water.

Be safe and happy hunting!

### **5 Important things to know:**

1. North duck zone will open one week later than in previous years, resulting in a single statewide opener for the North, South and Mississippi zones on Sept. 29;
2. Elimination of the Horicon Canada goose Management Zone (resulting in a single statewide regular goose zone);
3. Increase in the daily Canada goose bag limit to three birds per day and there is a second split in the Southern Canada goose zone resulting in a goose season that is open during the Christmas and New Year's holidays; and
4. Canada goose hunters, registration of Canada geese and in-field validation of the Canada goose hunting permit is no longer required.
5. Check out [The Basics of Waterfowl Hunting in Wisconsin](#) document on the [Waterfowl Hunting](#) webpage along with other useful tools in our Hunter resources tab for a few tips and tricks!

If you have any questions, please contact Trenton Rohrer WDNR Assistant Migratory Game Bird Ecologist send him an email or call.

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